



**Office of the Washington State Auditor  
Pat McCarthy**

March 29, 2022

Jean Holtrop  
22609 93<sup>rd</sup> Pl W  
Edmonds, WA 98020

Dear Ms. Holtrop:

Thank you for contacting the State Auditor's Office Citizen Hotline with your concerns regarding the City of Edmonds. We recently examined your concerns as part of our audit of the City and would like to share the results with you.

**Concern:** In your referral, you described concerns regarding storm drain and utility charges for customers who are billed on an annual basis. You said the City sends bills in February for the last half of the previous year, but charges customers the new year's rate rather than the rate that was in effect when the service was provided.

**Results:** It is the City's practice to bill water, sewer, and storm water customers at the rate when the bill is generated, not when the service is performed. Our audit reviewed City ordinance No. 4169 and found the following statement under Section 1 (related to water utilities):

*"All water base rate and variable rate charges on water utility bills mailed on or after January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year shall be based on rates as reflected in this section corresponding with said time period."*

Cities can approve rate increases to be in effect based on the mailing date even if it does not match the dates of service provided. There are no laws to prevent a city from adopting this practice. However, our review of Ordinance No. 4169 did note that Sections 2 and 3 related to sewer and storm water utilities did not have the same statement defining which rates to use.

As an exit item recommendation, we recommended the City clarify its ordinance to state which rate to use when billing for sewer and storm water utilities.

Thank you for taking the time to submit your concerns. If you have any questions, please contact me at (425) 948-7401.

Sincerely,

Kristina Baylor, Program Manager  
Team Everett

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